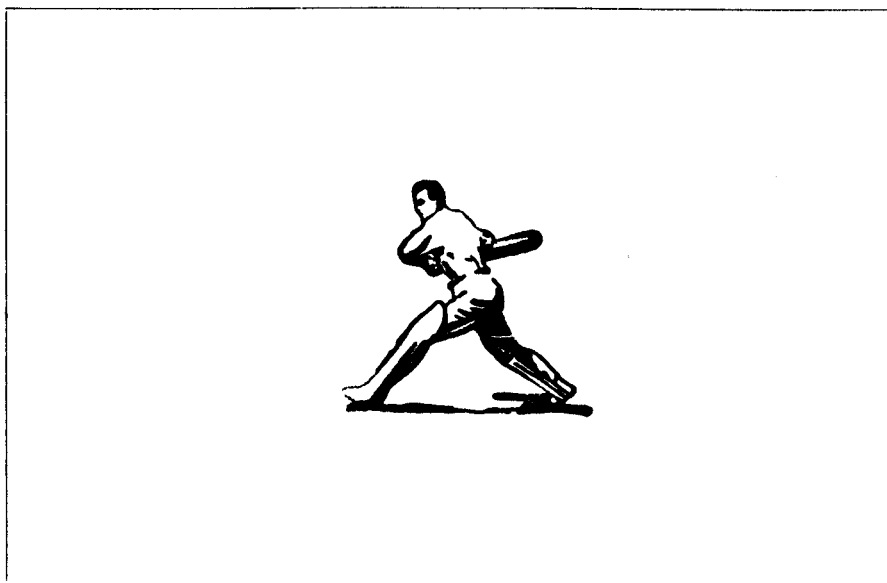


# BYGONE SILEBY



A SERIES OF BOOKLETS CONTAINING  
HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT THE VILLAGE

**No. 4 "Tales of Old Sileby Cricket"**

CRICKET IN BYGONE SILEBY

SOME ANECDOTES FROM THE PAST -

" WITH NOTES ABOUT SEVERAL OF THE BEST SILEBY-BORN PLAYERS.

It may perhaps surprise some of our readers to learn that the game of cricket has been played locally for nearly two hundred years.

The earliest reference to this sport is in a newspaper, "The Leicester and Nottingham Journal," dated 20th August, 1776, where the "Gentlemen Cricketers of Barrow," are mentioned in an advertisement for the sale of the "Articles of the Game of Cricket."

Another edition of the Journal announced, "A great Match at Cricket betwixt Barrow and Mountsorrel, we hear is to be played on the 9th September, at Barrow."

An oil painting of this period shows the players in shirts and knee breeches. The bowler is bowling under arm at a single wicket, which has two stumps set wide apart, and a solitary long ball. The batsman holds a bat which looks like a large hockey stick. The scorer scratches the number of runs on a board with the point of a knife. This is the type of cricket that was seen in this area in the 1700's.

We must go back one hundred and fifty-six years to find the first record of cricket in Sileby. During the last century and a half, the village has produced many outstanding players, and several of them are mentioned in the following pages.

If you were to ask the older enthusiasts of the game, "Who was the greatest Sileby-born cricketer?" you would receive a variety of answers. During a match on the Sileby ground this summer, when I suggested to several veteran spectators that Sam Dakin was the greatest of them all, they confessed that they had never heard of him. This is understandable, as Sam died before they were born, but it is sad that this remarkable man who played frequently for the All England Eleven, and the United All England Eleven, is not even remembered in the village in 1969.

This booklet is not intended for the serious student of the game. It is merely a collection of tales about local cricket and cricketers, which is intended to interest and amuse those who wish to know a little more about life in Bygone Sileby.

### THE FIRST KNOWN SILEBY CRICKET TEAM - 1813

The earliest discovered record of a Sileby team is to be seen in a copy of the "Leicester Journal," which reported that on Wednesday the 30th September, 1813, in a match played at Cossington, Syston beat Sileby. This match was played nearly two years before the Battle of Waterloo!

### THE FIRST KNOWN SILEBY CRICKETERS - 1813

During the 1800's, a good county team would have a match against a side which had twice their number of players. Two Sileby men were in a team of twenty-two which represented Leicester, against a Nottingham side of twelve players. The match took place at Loughborough, on the 15th November, 1813. As this was only six weeks before Christmas, it must have been a good year for cricket! The two Sileby players were the brothers John and William Taylor. Other players in the Leicester team who lived in this area, were :-

Barrow	J. Dix, W. Sharpe and W. Lovett.
Mountsorrel	J. Boam and J. Antill.
Seagrave	W. Bakewell.
Quorndon	J. Phipps.

Nottingham scored 27 and 33 runs, and lost the match by an innings and 7 runs.

### THE FIRST KNOWN VISITING CRICKET TEAM - 1820

In September, 1833, "The Nottingham Journal" reported an unusual match which took place in the village during Wakes Week :-

"Last week at Sileby feast, the women so far forgot themselves as to enter a game of cricket, and by their deportment as well as frequent applications to the tankard, they rendered themselves objects such as no husband, brother, or parent or lover could contemplate with any degree of satisfaction."

### SOME INTERESTING SINGLE WICKET MATCHES PLAYED IN THE 19th CENTURY

In the 1800's there was much interest in single wicket cricket matches, and great sums of money were won and lost in stakes with betting among the spectators. The players themselves put up sums of golden sovereigns in these matches.

A single wicket match was played at Rothley in the summer of 1828 between Deacon and Shuttlewood of Sileby, against J. Antill of Leicester, and Wright of Thurmaston. The scores were :-

Deacon, 12 runs.	Shuttlewood, 13 runs.
Antill, 7 and 4 runs.	Wright, 2 and 1 runs.

The Sileby pair won by 11 runs. It was a fine win. Mountsorrel-born John Antill was a natural cricketer, who during his long career played against the All England Eleven on no less than twenty-two occasions.

In 1852, a match between the villages of Barsby and Sileby took place at the Wharf Street Ground, Leicester. The teams were :-

Barsby - J. Warrington, W. Warrington and S. Warrington  
Sileby - Smith, Kirby and Widdowson.

The Warrington trio beat Sileby by 20 runs.

During the season of 1866, a match was arranged at Sileby between T. Pollard of Anstey, and J. Hall of Sileby. The match was played for a stake of £10 a side. J. Hall scored 40 runs, the Anstey man, 17 runs.

One of the largest sums of money known to have been associated with a single wicket match, was won by Sam Widdowson, one of the prominent cricketers of bygone Sileby. He was challenged by Mark Billson, a well known football referee, and the match took place at the Athletic Ground, Loughborough, in 1890. The contest at £10 on either side, attracted a great crowd, which delighted Sam Widdowson, as the winner was given the entire gate money!

## SOME TRUE STORIES FROM THE PAST

### A Roasting Time

In the middle of the 19th Century, there was tremendous rivalry between Sileby and Mountsorrel. A challenge was issued for the two teams to play a match at the Wharf Street Ground, Leicester, where each player was to put up £1, and to play for £11 a side.

The match took place about 1850, and the Sileby team won before a ground crowded with spectators from Sileby, Mountsorrel and other villages.

This victory was so highly regarded, that about 1870, on the twentieth anniversary of the match, a whole sheep was roasted on a spit by the side of Dudley's Bridge, in Brook Street.

### A Hat Trick

In the 1880's, a Barrow-upon-Soar carpenter, a man of gigantic stature, came to Sileby to play a single wicket match against Sam Widdowson, senior. The visitor wore the sporting garb of the time, including side whiskers and a tall top hat. When his turn came to bowl, he placed this hat by the side of the bowling stump, when it was seen that the hat contained no less than eight hard-boiled eggs! At lunch time, a crowd of Sileby supporters gathered round the big man and looked in wonder as he solemnly ate the eight eggs, sprinkling them with salt from a bottle he kept in his waistcoat pocket. Rising from lunch, he replaced his hat and began to hit the ball all over the field to win the match.

### Good Byes

During the early 1800's, the Leicester firm of Cooper Corah sent a team to play the village side. The business men's team had had some

success in games against other firms, but their visit to Sileby brought them a spectacular defeat. The Cooper Corah side scored only 4 runs, and 3 of those were byes!

#### A Big Tee - Total

In 1887, the Sileby Town team suffered a crushing defeat when they played the Leicester Temperance Team. The Temperance men batted first, and made 257 runs. The Sileby side were bowled out for only 48 runs. Despite this set back, it is said that the Sileby lads were not persuaded to sign the pledge.

#### A Grate Spectator

The village always had many young supporters of the game. In 1874, a youthful winder employed by a Sileby Framework-Knitter, developed the habit of slipping away from work whenever a match was being played in the village. One sunny day, he asked the Knitter if he could have the afternoon off to watch an important match being played in Sileby. The Knitter, who had to go to Leicester that day, not only refused the lad permission, but took the precaution of attaching the young winder to the oven door with a long chain. When the Knitter got back to the village late in the afternoon, he discovered that both his winder and the oven door had disappeared.

#### A Running Pump

A tale is told of an away match at a village on the south side of Leicester, about 1890. The home team scored a great number of runs, and appeared to have a safe total to win the match. Our lads were still 40 runs short when the last pair were at the wicket. One of them hit the ball hard and high towards the boundary, where it bounced once, and by chance, stuck fast in the spout of a pump. The umpires ruled that as the pump was inside the boundary, the ball was still in play! While the home side frantically tried to release the ball from the spout, the batsmen trotted up and down to make the necessary runs to win the match.

#### A Batting Feet

During the season of 1875, a sixteen year old Sileby boy, named Billy Taylor, was invited to play for the Sileby team in a match at Rothley. For some reason, his father refused to allow him to play. Billy was locked in his bedroom, and his boots taken away. Searching the bedroom, he found a pair of his sister's button-up boots and, putting them on, scrambled down a drain-pipe, and joined the rest of the team as they set off in a waggonette. Still wearing his sister's boots, he went to the wicket, and scored more runs than any other player in the Sileby team.

### The Pinnacle of Success

It is said that there was a Sileby Cricketer who could throw a cricket ball over the tower of the Parish Church, and catch it on the other side before it reached the ground. While some swear that the story is true, others declare it is impossible. As the tower is over eighty feet high, it would be quite a feat. The only way it might be done, would be to throw the ball almost vertically over the southwest corner of the tower, when standing near the west door, and then race round the porch, to collect the ball on its way down. It would be done, but it would require a strong arm and nimble feet. (We trust that this story will not be regarded as an invitation to the present generation to try it. God's Acre is sacred ground).

### The Horns of a Dilemma

One of the hazards of village cricket in bygone Sileby was the frequent possibility of having to share a field with a dairy herd! Even on important occasions, the cows had to be removed from the field at milking time. Some can still remember one old Sileby Umpire waving his arms and shouting angrily, "Kape the baysts off the fayld o' plee."

### The Lost Chord

In the 1890's, the Championship of the North Leicestershire Cricket League was to be decided by a match between Sileby, and the club of a village not far away, which will not be named here. As Sileby had twice won the Championship, there was a tense atmosphere when they arrived at the other village's ground. As the opposing side expected to win the match, they were supported by a great number of spectators.

Sileby batted first, and made 60v runs. When the home team went in and made 40 runs for the loss of only three wickets, Sileby's hopes of retaining the Championship honours seemed to have disappeared.

With the prospect of a great victory in sight, supporters of the home team gathered the members of the village brass band, and took them to the field secretly and hid them behind a haystack, so that at the right moment they would be ready to play the victorious team off the field to the sound of triumphant music.

In the meantime, the Sileby captain made a bowling change, and brought on the great Buff Betts, who immediately found a spot on the wicket, and turned the ball so sharply, the rest of the home side made a procession to the pavillion without scoring another run!

The Sileby team not only kept the North Leicestershire League Championship, but had much pleasure in expressing rude remarks to the village bandmen as they crept away from the cover of the haystack.

### It Aint Cricket

An ardent supporter of Sileby cricket was invited by a friend to watch a match between two other village teams. When the friend's team won, he asked the Sileby man, "Dooncher think that wor a good game?" The Sileby man replied, "Oo ar, but it'll niver tek the place o' cricket."

### How's That Again?

At a match being played in the village, a Sileby bowler delivered a particularly good ball, which trapped the batsman leg before wicket. The bowler yelled "Owzat?", but the umpire gazed silently at the sky. The bowler, in righteous indignation - "Wornt ay out?" "No," replied the umpire, "but if ah cop the so-and-so dooin it agen ay will bay."

### High and Low

The two principal bowlers in the Sileby Town Team during the decade, 1880 to 1890, were Sam Widdowson and Buff Betts. Both these fine cricketers were given trials with the Leicestershire Colts.

There was a memorable match which was played one Saturday at Belgrave, against the Belgrave Paragon Club. Sam Widdowson, in a devastating spell of bowling, took 8 Paragon wickets for only 4 runs. This match was specially remembered, for an unusual interruption. During the afternoon, a great crowd assembled to watch the ascent of a gas-filled balloon, and a young woman leap from the basket to make a spectacular descent by parachute.

### Legs before Wicket

Only the senior members of our village can remember old George Richards, who would be 80 years of age about 1900. He played with the best cricketers in Leicestershire in his time, but suffered much physical discomfort in his later years. About the turn of the century, he hobbled about leaning heavily on a stick. He used to say that his condition was the result of being struck on the legs by cricket balls during the many years he played the game. He died at Anstey.

### Bob a Job

Just after the First World War, Harold Hull, a fine Sileby cricketer, was offered a professional post with the Chard Cricket Club in Somerset. The contract assured him the sum of £3 a week, with a bonus of one shilling for each wicket he took during a season. Harold was a medium paced bowler who, on several occasions, was top of the North Leicestershire League bowling averages. He would have done well in professional cricket, but he did not accept the offer, owing to domestic ties.

### The Sileby Temperance Society Cricket Club

This Club was founded in June, 1877, by the Vicar, the Rev. A. Shears. Matches were played in "Mr. Harriman's field". Those who joined were expected to pay an entrance fee of 1s.0d. and a monthly subscription of 3d. Only members were permitted to play, but they did not have to be total abstainers, and were called upon to control their tempers and tongues. Among the rules was this item: "A Fine of 3d. will be imposed for using profane language or taking an oath while at practice or in a match." Members could buy the "uniform," a blue cap with gold cording, and the letters S.T.C.C. The team played in the Temperance League.

## SOME GREAT SILEBY CRICKETERS

### SAMUEL DAKIN 1807 - 1876

Sam was the son of Robert Dakin, who married Elizabeth Widdowson on the 24th May, 1801. Their son was born in March, 1807, and baptised at Sileby Parish Church on the 12th April.

While still a boy, Sam was sent to Derby to learn the trade of lace-weaving, and in the years that followed learned the skills of the game of cricket with a local Club. It soon became evident that he was a born cricketer, and that he would earn his living with bat and ball rather than weaving lace. By the time he was twenty years of age, he was back in Sileby and was playing in single wicket matches against the best players in the County.

Cricket reporters of the period described him as a right-hand batsman, who had a variety of strokes, and was particularly strong in front of the wicket, and on the leg-side. He was also an outstanding bowler of medium pace, and his round-arm action often made the ball move in the air, or lift off the pitch with unexpected pace. He was considered to be an excellent slip-fielder.

Even as a young man, he was regarded as one of the finest cricketers in Leicestershire. As he progressed, he played for the County, the Northern Counties, the M.C.C., the All England Eleven and the United All England Eleven.

The principal Cricket Ground in Leicester, where Sam Dakin played many of his matches, was in Wharf Street, not far from Humberstone Road. The ground contained also a bowling green and other sporting facilities, enclosed in an area of ten acres.

#### DETAILS OF SOME SINGLE WICKET MATCHES IN WHICH SAM DAKIN PLAYED

##### 1827 - At Wharf Street Leicester

A match between Sileby and Leicester

SILEBY:	Shuttlewood	5 runs
	Sam Dakin	7 runs
	Condon	17 runs
LEICESTER:	J. Antill	3 and 2 runs
	Squires	0 and 6 runs
	Wright	3 and 3 not out

Sileby won the match by an innings and 12 runs.

##### 1832 - At Wharf Street, Leicester

A match between Sam Dakin and W. Shelton

S. Dakin	0 and 19 runs
W. Shelton	6 and 15 runs



W. Shelton won by 2 runs. A second match was played for a stake of £10 a side. Sam Dakin won the £10 by an innings and 25 runs :-

S. Dakin	38 runs
W. Shelton	5 and 8 runs

1832 - At Nottingham

A match between Sam Dakin and T. Heath

S. Dakin	5 and 6 runs
T. Heath	28 and 31 runs

The Nottingham player won by 48 runs.

On the same day, Sam Dakin and W. Shelton of Leicester, played the Nottingham pair, S. Redgate and J. Slack :-

Dakin and Shelton	2 runs
Redgate and Slack	6 runs

1840 - At Wharf Street, Leicester.

A match between Sam Dakin, N. Deacon and A. Girling of Leicester, and Barker and Guy of Nottingham.

Barker	10 runs
Guy	16 runs
Dakin, Deacon and Girling	49 runs

Those who demand "brighter cricket" in 1969, and look longingly at the game as it used to be played "in the good old days", might be interested in the recorded statistics of this single wicket match between five of the best players in the midlands, played 129 years ago.

A. Girling went to the wicket at 1 p.m. and remained there until 4 p.m. During these three hours, he received 252 balls, played 198, and scored 14 runs.

N. Deacon received 103 balls, played 59 and scored 28 runs.

Sam Dakin received 75 balls, played 44 and scored 7 runs.

The Nottingham players lost the match by 23 runs.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF SAM DAKIN'S CAREER FROM 1829

For many years Dakin played for the Leicester team. In 1829, at the age of 22, he was in the side that played Nottingham at Wharf Street. Although the visitors won the match by 73 runs, Sam was 20 not out at the close of play.

He was in the Leicester XI which played at the Hyde Park Ground, Sheffield, 26th to 28th August, 1839. The Leicester XI lost the match, but Dakin had the highest score in his side, 33 runs.

At the beginning of September, 1839, the Sheffield team came to Wharf Street, where Sam repeated his feat in being the highest scorer, before he was bowled by Marsden for 37 runs.

In his early thirties, Dakin was invited many times to play for the Northern Counties Team. His first appearance at Lord's was as a member of the Northern Counties against the M.C.C., in 1840.

On the 26th and 27th August, 1844, the M.C.C. visited Wharf Street, to play the Northern Counties. Sam, playing for the Counties, scored 27 of the 126 runs which defeated the London team.

In 1845, in another match against the M.C.C. at Lord's, Sam scored 41 runs not out for the Northern Counties. It was a very exciting match, and the M.C.C. lost by an innings and one run. Sam's spirited batting so delighted the spectators on the Lord's Ground, a collection was made on his behalf, and a handsome gift of money was presented to the Sibley man on the steps of the pavillion.

The following season, 1846, brought yet another invitation to play for the Northern Counties against the M.C.C. at Wharf Street. This match attracted so much attention, that special trains carried great numbers of enthusiasts from all over the midlands. The M.C.C. won the first innings by 50 runs, and the second by 8 runs. Sam knocked 17 runs in the second innings.

In 1847, he played for Lord Winterton's Eleven against Lord Burghley's Eleven, and made 35 of his team's 96 runs.

At the age of 40, in 1847, and at the height of his career, Sam was invited by the famous William Clarke to play for the All England Eleven, which had come into existence the year before, and toured the country with the team. Later that season, he moved to London to join the M.C.C., and played with that team on many occasions until 1855.

Many of the All England Eleven broke away from William Clarke in 1852, and joined J. Dean and J. Wisden in the United England Eleven. Sam Dakin was one of the fourteen members of the new team who met at the Adelphi Hotel, Sheffield, and signed a contract. During the 1853-54 seasons, he played a number of times for the United England Eleven.

When his cricketing days were over, Sam Dakin settled in Cambridge, where he died in 1876, at the age of 69 years.

We hope that this brief account of this remarkable man, will help to preserve the memory of a Sibley cricketer who played with and against the best players in England.

#### J A M E S     D A K I N

Another 19th Century Sibley cricketer worthy of attention, was Jimmy Dakin, the son of another Sam Dakin. He lived at the "General Moore", and while living at the Inn, married Miss Mary Ann Martin. He was an outstanding bowler, and played for the M.C.C. during the 1890's.

His son, Mr. James Henry Dakin, now 95 years of age, can still remember the excitement of the day when his father, wearing a tall hat, boarded a train at Sibley station to take him to London, and Lord's.

## A L F R E D     Y A T E S

Some years ago, a sports reporter wrote, "Alf Yates is the greatest all-round cricketer Sileby ever had." He was born in 1881, the son of William Yates, a lime-kiln worker. In 1898, at the age of 18, he joined the Sileby Primitive Methodist Cricket Club, and played with them until 1918. After the First World War, in 1919, the Club changed its name to Sileby Town Cricket Club, and Alf continued as a player, and many years as Captain, until 1940, when he became a life-member.

He joined the Sileby Thursday Cricket Club when it was formed in 1906. At that time, the Club had among its members two bakers, two butchers, two publicans, two insurance agents, a chemist, a blacksmith, a shoe manufacturer, a cobbler, a saddler, a hosier and others. Club meetings were held at the "Duke of York", in High Street, until they disbanded in 1925.

As the Thursday Club began to make good progress in the League, Mr. Jack Sharpe offered a gold medal for each season's best batting average. Alf Yates won the medal in 1909, 1910, 1911 and 1912, however, the medal was not presented in 1912, for the donor said with some feeling, "I'm not giving four gold medals for one man to wear across his chest!"

The Thursday Club had both interesting and exciting matches, and several stories have come down the years :-

Occasionally, Ernest Swan, who was the Scorer for the Club, was invited to play in a match. He was a slow right-arm bowler, who took three strides, and tossed the ball into the air. Most batsmen could not resist the temptation to try to hit him out of the ground - some did get a six, but usually they skied the ball, which fell into the safe hands of Alf Yates. During a match played at Spinney Hill Park, the opening batsmen of the opposing team had knocked up 50 runs by the time Ernest was put on to bowl. As his first ball floated down, the batsman hit it hard and high and Alf, racing across the field managed to get under it to make a spectacular catch. The batsman remarked to Ernest that it was a fluke, but the bowler replied with grave dignity, "Oh no it wasn't, that's the way me and him allus gets 'em out!"

On another occasion, when the team was playing on the Sileby ground, in Mountsorrel Lane, Ernest Swan was put on to give Alf the chance of removing a stubborn batsman. As expected, the ball came like a bird to Alf, who moved further and further backwards, then suddenly disappeared - he had forgotten that there was an 8 ft. ditch behind him, which contained a couple of feet of rich mud from the Sileby Gasworks.

Headlines in the sports section of the local newspapers made frequent references to this exceptional cricketer. One reporter who described a match when Alf devastated the other team by fine bowling, gave the headline, "YATES UNPLAYABLE". He was known everywhere, and respected as a great player.

One year, Sir Lindsay Everard invited him to play for his eleven in a Charity Match, against a team of distinguished midland cricketers. The match was to be played at a village where the pitch was in very poor condition. Alf, who was then a veteran, was rather relieved that the match was called off, as the star bowler for the opposition was to have been Harold Larwood, at that time the fastest bowler in the world. On that pitch, ANYTHING could have happened!

Some aspects of his career:

One year, a local newspaper offered a cricket bat as a prize for the best performance during the month of June. Alf won the bat, having taken 17 wickets for 59 runs.

He once took 8 wickets for three runs in a British Legion Cup match, played at Sileby.

At Anstey, in a North Leicestershire League match, he took 7 Anstey wickets for 5 runs.

In 1913, when playing for the Sileby Thursday Club against the Belgrave Town side on Belgrave Pastures, he scored 94 runs.

In an Ex-service Cup match at Sileby against Mountsorrel, he took 5 wickets for 13 runs, then went in and made 83 not out.

For several seasons, he had the best averages in both batting and bowling, in the North Leicestershire League.

In 1923, he visited Denmark, playing for the Leicester Tourists.

He was made President of the North Leicestershire Cricket League 1946-1947.

When he retired from cricket, he took up bowls - and has the trophies to prove it!

ERNEST WILLIAM PARKINSON

Alderman E. W. Parkinson, known during his long sporting career as "Ernie" or "Parko", learned to play cricket at the old National School on Barrow Road. Using a home-made bat, with "stumps" chalked on a wall, more than once he hit a "compo" ball through a window of the school, or the school-house, bringing upon himself the wrath of the severe but greatly respected headmaster, Arthur Skelton. Other games at that time were played in Brisket Square, and in the field near the wash-pit. When he moved on to the Grammar School at Quorn, he soon found a place in the Junior Cricket Team.

By 1914, the year the First World War broke out, he had become a fast bowler of great merit, and signed for the Leicester Sparkenhoe Cricket Club, in the Leicester Town League. It was the last peace-time season for many years, and made memorable, for he topped the bowling average, and was awarded a trophy by his grateful Club.

In 1915, Ernest joined the Leicestershire Yeomanry, and was selected to play for their Eleven against Regimental School and College teams.

The year 1917 took him to the Cadet Battalion, at Gales, in Scotland, where he achieved various bowling successes against Army teams at Ayr, Troon, Ardrossen and other places. On one occasion, the unit was confined to barracks, and only those with good reason were able to obtain a week-end leave pass. In his application, Ernest requested to be absent for "Architectural Research". When the Commanding Officer asked for an explanation, he was told it was to take rubbings of headstones in a local cemetery. In the afternoon, he went to a cricket match, and as he settled down to enjoy the game, the C. O. arrived and sat nearby!

After demobilisation, Ernest settled once more in the village, where he assisted in building up the Sileby Town Cricket Club for their matches in the North Leicestershire League, and also raising funds for a new pavillion.

From 1919 until 1938, he played with the Sileby Town team which won the North Leicestershire League Division 1 Championship four times. The Sileby Ex-service Cup adorned the sideboard on three occasions..

The pace and power of his fast bowling in those days is realised when we hear of the number of stumps which were broken when dismissing a batsman.

During the seasons 1921, 1923 and 1928, he was selected to play for the Leicestershire Amateur Cricket Tourists, which visited Denmark. Matches were played against the best Clubs, and Representative sides. During the Tour of 1921, he was top of the bowling average, and scored a good number of runs. At the town of Calborg, he took 3 wickets with 4 balls. An account of the Tour can be seen in Wisden, 1922.

Ernest was chosen to play for Leicestershire, against Notts and Northants, and in 1921 and 1922, was Captain of the County Second Eleven on a number of occasions.

From 1922 to 1934, he played for the Thursday Team of the Leicester Town Cricket Club, and took part in matches at Skegness during Whit weeks, against Norfolk, Lincolnshire, and other strong sides. In addition, he was Captain of a North Leicestershire Representative Team on Whit Mondays, against Leicester.

Just before the Second World War, cartilage trouble put an end to his cricket. However, when serving with the Royal Air Force, in 1940, he was invited to Captain the South R.A.F. XI, in a match at Bournemouth. Although "slow" bowling, he took four wickets. Later, he was awarded a Royal Air Cricket Cap.

During the past eighteen years, he has been President of the North Leicestershire Cricket League, which comprises six divisions, with thirty-seven Clubs and fifty-three teams. There is also a Junior Section, which has two divisions, Loughborough and Coalville. The League has more than eight hundred players.

In all his long playing career, Ernest always put the Sileby Saturday Team first, and this is still his principal interest in sport. Recently, he was presented with a silver-mounted goblet in recognition of his many years of service to the Club as both player and President.

ADVANTIS KEMEN  
HIGHGATE TAXIS  
YOUR LOCAL TAXI SERVICE  
SIR DON BRADMAN'S TEST CRICKET BAT CAME TO SILEBY

During the first week in May, 1948, the veteran Sileby cricketer Lawson Ward, played for his firm's team against the British United Shoe Machinery Co., Ltd. Despite his three score and ten years, Lawson Ward made fifty runs not out, against the Leicester side. This feat caught the attention of the local press, and one newspaper produced a headline, "70 - 50 NOT OUT." The same week, Leicestershire were playing the Australians, and Don Bradman, the Australian captain read the account of Lawson's undefeated half-century, and wrote a letter congratulating the Sileby man. The Australian and the veteran exchanged correspondence, met, and became great friends. At the end of July, after the Fourth Test Match at Leeds, Bradman gave the bat he had used to Lawson, and it became one his proudest possessions.

Some information about the bat

The Fourth Test Match, played on 22nd., 23rd., 24th., 26th and 27th., July, 1948, resulted in a win for Australia which gave them the rubber.

First Innings.

When Don Bradman went in, late in the afternoon of the second day, the score was 13 runs for 1 wicket. By close of play, he had made 31 runs. The following day it rained, and the Yorkshire pitch became lively. Bradman was struck by a rising ball from Bedser, which unsettled him, and a couple of overs later, he was bowled by Pollard. He had received 56 balls, and scored 33 runs.

Second Innings.

On the last day of the Test Match, 27th July, Bradman went in at 1 p.m. when Australia had made 57 runs for the loss of 1 wicket. He was missed twice in the slips off the bowling of Compton, and during the half hour before lunch, scored 35 runs. After lunch, he went on to complete his century by 4.10 p.m., and by tea, had made 108. He went on to score 173 not out.

Bradman's second innings kept him at the wicket four and a quarter hours. He received 292 balls, and hit 29 boundaries. It was his last Test Match century. On scoring 145, he completed 5,000 runs against England, and was the first batsman to establish that record score.

This bat, which had knocked 206 runs against England at Leeds, arrived in Sileby in the summer of 1948. It is now the property of Mr. Ronald Ward, and a treasured possession.

ADVERTISEMENTS

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ROGER H. LATHAM,  
153, HIGHGATE ROAD, SILEBY.

\* \* \* \* \*

BYGONE SILEBY

The next booklet with a yellow cover, will be about how Sileby  
came into existence, long ago. It will contain a number of illustrations,  
and will have a photograph of old Sileby on the cover. The number which  
follows that will be about the village in 1900. Future booklets will  
alternate between the ancient history of the village, and life in  
Victorian times. It is hoped that eventually, the booklets will provide  
a complete record of Sileby.

If you wish to collect the whole series, why not ask your  
newagent to send them with your newspapers, when they come out ?

Readers may be interested to learn that copies of Bygone Sileby are  
being sent to Australia, New Zealand, Canada, U.S.A., Africa, and to  
towns all over the British Isles.

\* \* \* \* \*

Enquiries for advertisements on this page should be made to the Vicar,  
telephone: SILEBY 2493.